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Message Text

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FROM: LOS DEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS
SUBJ: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR
AHMED, AUGUST 13.

1. SUMMARY: THE SECRETARY HAD A MOST USEFUL AND CORDIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS LOS MATTERS WITH EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR M.S. FAMIR AHMED IN NEW YORK, AUGUST 13. DISCUSSIONS FOCUSSED ON DEEP SEABED MINING, STRAITS AND PROVISIONAL APPLICATION OF THE TREATY. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, THE EGYPTIANS INDICATED THAT THEY COULD ACCEPT THE RSNT ON STRAITS, ALTHOUGH THEY NEEDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEFEND THEIR THESIS. THE SECRETARY INVITED FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY TO WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SECRETARY MET WITH EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AHMED AND PROFESSOR SHEHAB OF THE EGYPTIAN LOS DELEGATION TO DISCUSS LOS MATTERS AND TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF THEIR DELEGATION FIRSTHAND. IN RESPONSE TO THE SECRETARY'S QUERY WHETHER THE ARAB GROUP STRATEGY WAS TO PRESENT AGREEMENT AT THIS SESSION, AHMED STRESSED THAT IF THAT WAS THE ARAB POSITION, IT WAS NOT EGYPT'S POSITION. THEY WANT AN AGREEMENT SOON AND WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A MODERATE ROLE IN THE ARAB GROUP. AHMED BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT A TREATY COULD NOT BE CONCLUDED THIS SESSION. THE SECRETARY STATED THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD SOLVE THE
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CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS THIS SESSION, SO THAT THE NEXT ONE

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WOULD BE A DRAFTING SESSION.

3. DEEP SEABED MINING. AHMED STATED THAT THE FIRST QUESTION TO BE CONSIDERED IS THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE COUNCIL AND THE ASSEMBLY, WITH DEVELOPED STATES FAVORING A STRONG COUNCIL, AND THE LDCS A STRONG ASSEMBLY. THE SECRETARY THOUGHT, FOR US BUREAUCRATIC REASONS, THAT THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE DEFERRED; THAT DEALING WITH AND SOLVING OTHER ISSUES FIRST, E.G., THE ACCESS SYSTEM, WOULD ALLOW THE US TIME AND SCOPE TO COME UP WITH A MORE CREATIVE AND LESS RIGIED POSITION ON THE COUNCIL. AHMED HAD NO OBJECTION BUT STATED THAT EGYPT WAS IN A "SQUEEZE" WITH THE LDCS. THE SECRETARY ON THIS AND OTHER ISSUES REASSURED AHMED THAT WE DO NOT WANT TO EXPOSE THE EGYPTIANS.

4. STRAITS. AHMED SAID "WE CAN LIVE WITH THE RSNT" ON STRAITS. PROFESSOR SHEHAB NOTED THAT A "GOOD" CONCESSION WAS MADE TO EGYPT BY DISTINGUISHING STRAITS CONNECTING TWO PARTS ON THE HIGH SEAS (E.G., GIBRALTAR) AND STRAITS CONNECTING THE HIGH SEAS FROM CLOSED SEAS (READ, TERRITORIAL SEA, E.G. TIRAN). SHEHAB CONTINUED TO ADVANCE A REGIME OF SUSPENDABLE INNOCENT PASSAGE IN THE LATTER STRAIT (RSNT PROVIDES FOR NON-SUSPENSION) BUT WANTED THE CHANCE TO DEFEND THEIR THESIS. THE SECRETARY FOCUSSED ON AHMED'S STATEMENT, STATING THAT HE HAD THOOGHT WE HAD A PROBLEM. HE FURTHER STATED THAT THIS WAS NOT THE TIME FOR EGYPT TO MAKE THAT CONCESSION.

5. PROVISIONAL APPLICATION. AHMED STATED THAT PROVISIONAL APPLICATION CREATED PROBLEMS FOR LDCS BUT SUGGESTED THAT THE TREATY MIGHT BE APPLIED PROVISIONALLY AFTER IT WAS RATIFIED BY ONE-THIRD OF THE CONFEREES BUT BEFORE IT CAME INTO FULL FORCE INTERNATIONALLY. THE SECRETARY AGREED TO STUDY THIS PROPOSAL.

6. AHMED SAW NO OTHER PROBLEMS. THE SECRETARY APPRECIATED EGYPTIAN MODERATION AND REQUESTED THAT THEY USE THEIR
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INFLUENCE IN THE GROUP OF 77 AND IN THE ARAB GROUP.

7. THE SECRETARY WAS EFFUSIVE IN HIS PRAISE OF PRESIDENT SADAT AND INVITED FORMIN FAHMY TO VISIT THE PRESIDENT AND HIMSELF IN WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER. AHMED INDICATED THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE AFTER 17 OR 19 SEPTEMBER, AND AGREED TO CONVEY INVITATIONS.
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